

BRINGING SINNERS TO THE SAVIOR

NO. 2731

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JUNE 16, 1901
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 22, 1880

*“And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son,
which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him:
and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away:
and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.
He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?
how long shall I be with you? bring him unto me.
And they brought him to him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him;
and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.”
Mark 9:17-20*

I DO not intend to speak so much upon the whole of this text as to use the latter part of it as a sort of motto for an appeal to Christian people to be diligent in the service of their Lord. If we wish to do good to our fellow creatures, the best thing that we can do for them is to bring them to the Lord Jesus Christ. At the feet of Jesus we ourselves obtained salvation if we are saved—we never had any true peace of heart until we came to Christ—and we never should have had any if we had remained apart from Him.

The great Physician, who healed our soul-sickness, was Christ Jesus the Lord. And if we are to be the means of blessing to the sons of men, we must recommend to them the Physician whom we have proved to be so exceedingly useful to ourselves. They cannot be blessed, any more than we could be, until they are brought to Jesus.

When any of us desire to be of service to others, it is well for us to learn the best way of setting about our task, for if we do not know how to go to work, all our earnestness may be expended upon that which is useless. But when we understand what we are at, and concentrate all our powers upon wise and proper efforts, then are we likely to succeed. To my mind, the first thing that we have to strive after, in the name of God, and by the help of the Holy Ghost, is to bring men to Jesus Christ—and God forbid that we should ever lift even a finger to point them anywhere else for salvation. Each true believer, as well as every Christian minister, should say,

*“Tis all my business here below
To cry, ‘Behold the Lamb!’”*

We are to point sinners to Jesus—ourselves looking at Him all the while and praying that they also may look unto Him and live.

I think I need hardly remind you that every Christian is bound to give himself to the blessed work of bringing sinners to the Savior. Common humanity should lead us to attempt this task. Is it necessary for me to bid you love your fellows and seek their good? Why, even they who have no Christianity are often exceedingly generous, and humane, and kind. Some persons whose religious opinions are full of error have, nevertheless, manifested great tenderness and sympathy towards the sick, and the suffering, and the poor—and they have set a noble example of what others might do for the needy.

Much more, then, ought the followers of the loving Christ to have tender, sympathetic hearts and anxiously desire to do the most they can for their fellow men. I shall take it for granted, my dear hearers,

that you who are members of this church, or of any other true Christian church, are desirous to be the means of blessing to those who are about you, and that you also believe that the surest way to bless them is to bring them to Christ.

I. So, coming to our text, I begin by remarking that PARENTS ARE THE FIRST PERSONS WHO SHOULD LABOR TO BRING THEIR CHILDREN TO CHRIST.

In the seventeenth verse, we read that *the epileptic youth was, in a sense, brought to Christ by his father*. “Master,” said the poor man, “I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit.” He hardly knew how to set to work, for he somehow confounded Christ with His disciples. So, as the Lord Jesus was away upon the mountain, he brought his son to the disciples. They could not cast out the devil, yet it was a right thing, on the part of the father, to bring his child to them. It showed a loving spirit and a desire to see him cured.

I am afraid there are some fathers, who even call themselves Christians, who have not yet done as much for their sons and daughters as that father did for his boy, for they have not asked for the sympathy and help of Christian people on behalf of their own children. I am utterly ashamed of some professors of religion who say that they really must leave that matter to their children. I have heard of one man who said that he did not like to prejudice his boy, so he would not say anything to him about religion. The devil, however, was quite willing to prejudice the lad, so very early in life he learned to swear, although his father had a foolish and wicked objection to teaching him to pray.

If you ever feel it incumbent upon you not to prejudice a piece of ground by sowing good seed in it, you may rest assured that the weeds will not imitate your impartiality, but they will take possession of the land in a very sad and shocking manner. Where the plow does not go, and the seed is not sown, the weeds are quite sure to multiply—and if children are left untutored and untrained, all sorts of evils will spring up in their hearts and lives.

If a professedly Christian parent has not even put his children under godly tuition, what shall I say of him? He must be a Christian watered down to a very low point or beaten out to extreme thinness. There must be very little, if any, grace left in such a man as that. We have known wealthy Christian men send their boys to school where the whole influence was altogether against religion or else utterly neutral. Girls have sometimes been sent abroad to learn a foreign language in the midst of those who are steeped in gross error—and it does not seem to have occurred to the parents that they first ought to have cared about the souls of their daughters.

Oh, dear me! are such people as these worthy to be called Christians at all? Or do they merely wear the Christian label upon their breasts without having the grace of God in their hearts? Dear brother or sister, if you cannot speak to your own children altogether as you can wish about their souls, do follow the example of this man and bring your dear ones to the disciples, that they may see what they can do for them in the Master’s name.

Still, recollect that there was a mistake in this father’s action, because at first, he made the disciples the terminus of his journey instead of merely coming to them *en route* to Christ. We may make Christian men the way by which we try to get to Christ, but to stop at them and not to bring the children to Christ Himself, will be fatal to all our desire for the salvation of their souls.

This man did not see his child cured by the disciples, *yet he persevered after his first failure*. “Master,” said he, “I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit...I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.” In effect, he said, “They have failed, so I have brought him to You.”

So, if the Sunday school teacher has not been blessed to your girl—if the instruction in that Bible class, to which she has gone for years, has not been the means of her conversion—if your boy, after having had the best religious training, remains unsaved, go straight away to the great Master in your earnest prayers and so bring your dear children to Christ.

I am not a believer in the theory that some hold—that children do not grow up in the fear of God if they have been trained in it. It is true that there have been many ministers’ sons who have been ungodly

young men, I have had very sad proof of that fact, yet I fear that some of those ministers may have neglected their own families while they were preaching to others. It is very easy for a man—especially if his wife does not help him to train their children aright—to neglect the affairs of his own family while he is continually busy about the work of the church. And thus his own children are not trained up in the way they should go. I wish that this evil was not so common as it is, but I do know that some have grown up ungodly because there was not due attention paid to them. The vineyard at home was neglected while other people's vineyards were being kept.

If you have no family prayer and your children do not grow up to be Christians, how can you expect that they will? If there is no altar in the house, is it right to call it God's house at all? Wherever Abraham pitched his tent, he built an altar too—and that is the custom of all those who live near to God—they sanctify their dwellings with daily prayer and praise. But if that practice is neglected and the father keeps his religion in the background and does not let it be seen at home, I do not marvel if his boys and girls grow up to say that there is nothing in it. It is a sad thing when children can say, "Father made a profession of religion, but his life was not consistent with it. Mother also professed to be a Christian, but we never heard her speak of Christ. She never prayed with us, or in our hearing, for us."

Where no influence is used, it is not probable that there can be any result. I told you, the other night, of a dear brother who said, when I exhorted my hearers to select somebody to pray for, that he had prayed for one person for twenty years and that he is not converted yet. So I said to him, "Have you spoken to your friend personally about his soul? Have you made it your business to go down to his house and tell him that you are anxious about him?" "No," he replied, "I cannot say that I have done so." "Well, then," I asked, "do you expect God to hear prayers of that kind? Suppose I were to pray that it might be a good harvest over in that field and yet, for twenty years, I did not sow any corn there? The probability is that when I did sow some, I should get my prayers answered, and gather in the harvest."

If we pray for anything, God expects us to use the proper means of obtaining it—and if we neglect the means, we have no right to expect Him to believe in the sincerity of our prayer. If a father and mother pray for their children, but never pray with them, or speak to them personally about the welfare of their souls, they must not wonder if they are not brought to Christ.

II. But secondly, although parents should be the first persons to bring their children to Christ, WE MAY, EACH ONE OF US, HELP IN THIS BLESSED WORK. Our text says, "*They* brought him unto him." That is, the disciples helped the father to bring this poor epileptic child to Jesus.

In seeking to bring sinners to the Savior, we shall find that *some are brought to Him by almost unconscious influence*. I believe that where a man is full of the grace of God, he is like a Leyden jar that is charged with electricity—if he possesses true holiness, he will give some of it to others almost without knowing that he is doing so. I have met with many singular instances of that indirect way of doing good.

Some three or four months ago there was a working man, whose wife, being suddenly taken ill, needed a certain Christian woman to come and attend her. The husband went to her house to try to find her. It was on the Sabbath evening, so she was where she ought to be at that time, in the house of God, in a little chapel not many miles from here.

The man knew that he must have this good woman to go to his wife, so he went to the chapel, and as he could not get her at once, he waited for a few minutes and listened to the preacher. He was interested in what he heard, so he went to that chapel again the next Sabbath morning. Before long, he was brought to know the Lord and now he has joined the church, and by his earnest work, is a great help to the minister. Well, now, if that good woman had not been a Christian, she might not have been in that chapel. If she had not been a regular attendant to the means of grace, she would not have been there and the man would not have had to go to the place where he found blessing to his soul.

I know of another case that may seem equally strange. A man and his wife went to live in a certain street where nobody, to their knowledge, attended any place of worship. It is dreadful to think that, in London, you may go into street after street where a person who goes to either a church or a meeting house is quite an exception to the general rule. It is sad that it should be so, but it certainly is.

These two people regularly went to a place of worship and it happened there was living in the same street a man who, when he resided in the country, was a regular attendant on the means of grace. And as these people went by his window, Sunday after Sunday, although they did not know him and never said a word to him, and were even quite unconscious of their influence over him, they were preaching to him by their action, for it rebuked him and he said to himself, "What would my mother think if she knew how I spend my Sabbath days? There are two good people, who are just like my father and mother at home, who, about this time, are going to the meeting house." He brushed himself up for the evening service, found his way to the house of God, and soon became a Christian.

When you are doing anything that is right, you cannot tell how much blessing you are scattering. Any man or woman, a master or a servant, may be of essential service in bringing others to Jesus simply by a happy, cheerful, kind, gentle behavior. You may not have the opportunity of saying much for Christ—perhaps it might not be proper in your position that you should do so—but those about you watch you, they note your genial spirit and they begin to like you. They observe your consideration for others and they admire it.

Then they see your cheerfulness and they wonder what is the secret of it. Possibly you are ill and someone comes to visit you. You are very patient, you even sing in the midst of your pain. Persons who see and hear you, and who note how you bear it all, say to themselves, "There is something within these people that we do not understand," and thus you exercise an influence over them although you may have said very little to them. The fact that you are a Christian is one of the most practical and powerful means of bringing others to inquire what this religion is which elevates, sweetens, softens, and yet strengthens, and makes people to be manifestly like their Father in heaven.

I remember hearing Mr. Jay, of Bath, tell the story of a good girl, a servant, who attended his meeting house. Her master and mistress were very strict church people, and when they found out that Jane went to the meeting house, they talked to her very roughly and said that she must give up going there. She answered very gently that she must go where her own soul was fed and she could not meet their wishes in that matter, though she was willing to do so in everything else. "Very well, Jane," they replied, "then you must take a month's notice, for we cannot have any of these horrible Dissenters living with us."

That evening, as the lady and gentleman sat talking together, one of them said, "She is really a good girl, do you not think we are treating her very badly? Suppose she were to insist that we should go to the meeting house with her, we should say that it was very wrong for her to tyrannize over us, so is it not wrong for us to try to tyrannize over her?" "She took it so gently, too," said the other. "We should not have stood it as she did. Suppose we go and see what this Mr. Jay is like whom she goes to hear—for if he is a good man, she may as well go to the meeting house as to the church."

They went and in telling the story, Mr. Jay said, "They have continued to come and hear Mr. Jay up to the present time." So, you see, that the servant had, by her consistent Christian character, brought her master and mistress round to her way of thinking, although they could not coerce her to theirs—and you can judge what influence you also may exert over others if you have the grace of God abounding in you.

May God fill us full of it, that we may be the means of bringing many sinners to the Savior! Yet we must not be content with unconscious influence—and I hope none of us will be like the young gentleman who advertised that he would like board and lodging where his Christian example would be considered to be an equivalent for what he received.

In many instances, much good has been done in bringing souls to Christ *by casual seed-sowing*. Eternity alone will disclose the good results that have sometimes followed from the utterance of one short word. I trace all the light I have upon a certain subject to a remark made by the usher in a school where I was many years ago. He was teaching geography and he let drop a sentence, which I need not repeat, but I remember it to this day, and it later had an influence upon my whole after career and character.

I also recollect a few gracious words that were spoken to me by a godly old woman, who used to read her *Gospel Herald*, and talk to me about the power of divine grace. I rejoiced to get a grip of the grand old Calvinistic doctrine, very much through half a dozen sentences that fell from the lips of that poor, humble Christian woman, whom it was my great happiness to help, in later years, when she was in poverty. I felt that I owed so much to her that I must do anything I could to comfort her.

You will often prove that, as George Herbert says,

“A verse may find him who a sermon flies,”—

and that a short sentence may strike and stick where a long address may altogether fall flat. Give away a tract whenever you can. Better still, give a little book that will not be torn up, one that has a cover on it, for you will probably see it upon the table when you call again. Speak a word for the Master whenever it is possible and offer a short prayer at every convenient opportunity.

I think we should make it a rule, whenever we hear a foul or blasphemous word in the street—(and alas! we constantly do so)—always to pray for the person who utters it. Perhaps then the devil might find it expedient not to stir up people to swear, if he knew that it excited Christians to pray. Try it, at all events, and see whether it may not have a subtle power to stop the profanity which is so terribly on the increase.

Over and above all this indirect service, there ought to be *direct effort made by all Christians for the conversion of those around them*. Try what you can each one do by personally addressing other people. I have heard of one, an utter stranger to religion, who was brought to Christ through a gentleman tapping him on the shoulder and saying to him, “Well, my brother, how does your soul prosper today?” The one to whom he spoke turned round, having never heard such a question before, and the other, as he saw his face, exclaimed, “I beg a thousand pardons. I thought you were my old friend So-and-o, who has been in the habit of putting that question to me.”

It was a mistake, but it was a very blessed mistake, for the Spirit of God used it to the awakening of a conscience that was lying dormant—an honest conscience which only needed to be aroused by some such startling inquiry as that. Dear friends, try to speak personally to some friends about their immortal souls. I know that it is not easy work for some of you to break the ice and make a beginning in such service, but I can assure you that you will do it better and better the more often you attempt it.

Beside that, bring people to the means of grace definitely with a view to their conversion. Help me all you can in trying to preach to the people. Get any, in whom you are concerned, to come to the house of God. A young man, who grew up to be a most useful minister of Christ, had been entirely careless about divine things until a neighbor said to him, “I have a sitting in the Tabernacle. If you will come with me, you can use my ticket.”

The friend, who made that kind suggestion, stood, all the service through, where he could see the young man, and he was earnestly praying for him all the while. The result of lending his seat, on that one occasion, was that the young man was brought to the Savior. He was soon in the Sabbath school as a teacher and afterwards, as I told you, he became a most useful minister.

Are there not more of you who might try that plan? I know that some of you have done this—then do it over and over again. Deny yourself of a Christian privilege for the sake of bringing others where the Lord will be likely to meet with them, especially if you back up the preacher’s word with your continual prayer on behalf of those whom you have brought to listen to his message.

Then, if you really want to bring souls to Christ, remember that there are the young to be taught. Just now, all our schools are languishing for lack of teachers. O you who would have your crown studded with gems, seek them among the little ones! It is a happy task, however arduous it may be, so give yourselves to it with your whole heart and soul.

Others of you, if you do not feel called to take a class of children, might sometimes speak words of warning to the grosser sinners with whom you come into contact, and words of encouragement to those

who are seeking the Savior. There are many and many a poor sinner, floundering in the Slough of Despond, who only wants someone, rightly named Help, to come and point out to them where the steppingstones are, or to lend them a hand lest he should altogether sink under his crushing burden of guilt.

This I know, dear Christian friends, if you are not trying to bring sinners to the Savior, you are missing the chief end of your being and you are also missing the most joyous work that can ever occupy your attention. Oh, if you bring a soul to Jesus, the joy of it is unspeakable! I have before my mind's eye, at this moment, a little cottage in the country, in which lived the first person of whom I heard that I had been the means of bringing her to Jesus.

After preaching for some little time, I wanted some seal to my service, and when the deacon of the little church of which I was the minister said to me, "There was a poor woman cut to the quick, the other Sunday night, and I believe she has found the Savior," I posted off directly to see her. Those of you who have had a similar experience can imagine the joy I had in hearing her tell the story. She went home years ago—perhaps the first of those who have gone to heaven, whom God has called by my means—but I was so glad, so happy, so delighted with my first convert that I say to you, "Do seek the same joy, if you yourself know the Lord."

So that is my second point, that all of us, who are, believers in Christ, may bring others to Him.

III. My third observation is that THERE ARE SOME OCCASIONS THAT NEED UNITED EXERTIONS.

God, the Holy Spirit, of course does the whole work in the conversion of a soul, but He works by instrumentalities, and there are some desperate cases in which He does not work upon a soul through one instrument alone, but He moves a number of persons to act together to that end. Our text says, "*They brought him to him.*" This poor youth was foaming and gnashing with his teeth, and tearing himself just as you have seen persons do in an epileptic fit, so that it took several persons to hold him. Together they grasped him and with one desperate, united effort, they brought him to the feet of Jesus, and Jesus cast out the evil spirit and healed the poor sufferer.

In this way, *people and minister may unite in bringing sinners to the Savior.* There may be some persons who come here, who will never be converted until you and I join in seeking their salvation. Somebody must preach, but other bodies must pray—and if a score of you should be praying about any one person in the congregation, I believe that it will not be long before that epileptic is cured. The devil himself shall be defeated by the united prayers of many believers, especially if they are those mighty prayers of which our Savior spoke when He said, "This kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting"—when the praying souls hunger for the salvation of the suffering one and unitedly cry to God to effect it.

We have had much happy union in Christian work, let us have more of it. Say to one another, "While the pastor preaches, we will pray. Nay, more than that, we will continually remember him in our prayers, for we know that he needs them and prizes them." That is quite true, dear friends, for it is no small thing to minister, every Sabbath day, to this great company of people and then, through the printed page, to address tens of thousands of readers, even to the utmost ends of the earth. Yes, I do indeed need your prayers and your help—give them to me, for then we may be sure that "they"—that is, all of us together—shall bring many to Jesus.

Another form of cooperation is when there is a soul that has been prayed for, but no answer has come. So you call a few praying people to meet in your house and you tell them the details of the case, and make a point of praying especially for that person. I have known instances in which brethren have collected a score of Christian friends, who, perhaps, never before met in one place—but they pledged themselves to pray about one particular case, and their united prayers have, with God's blessing, accomplished what previously seemed to be impossible.

It has been truly said that if you have a very hard thing, you can cut it with something harder. And if any heart is especially hard, God can use the hard, strong, persistent vehemence of other mighty, passionate souls to pray the blessing of eternal life into that stubborn, rebellious heart. I would like to

hear more frequently of friends banding themselves together, and meeting in their private houses to pray about somebody or other, making the person about whom they are interested the subject of special supplication—that would be the way to bring him to Jesus.

Then, *add to that prayer, distinct united effort*. Perhaps if one friend should speak to that person, he may resent it. Then, if another should address him, he may receive it coolly. But when another speaks to him, he may begin to listen a little more attentively—and the next one may be able to put the key into the keyhole and be the means, in the hand of God, of opening the closed door of that man's heart. If God moves us to join in effort for any soul, I do not believe that we shall often find it to be a failure.

At any rate, if a man insists on going down to hell, I should like that we should make it very difficult for him to get there. If he will not turn to Christ, I would that we were resolved that it should not be for want of being prayed for, or for lack of being earnestly pleaded with. We will be clear of his blood—we will shake off the very dust from our feet against such as determine to remain impenitent—and resolve that, to the utmost of our capacity, Christ shall be set forth, so that if men reject Him at all, they shall willfully reject Him.

Oh, that my words might stir up all of you who profess to be Christians! We have over five thousand members—nearly six thousand. Oh, if all were alive unto God and earnest in His service—"all at it and always at it"—what might not be done, God the Holy Spirit blessing our labors?

But alas! there are many people here, like the camp-followers of an army, who do not fight when the battle comes on. Those who do the fighting are often hampered by these other people and sometimes, they almost feel as if they wanted to clear the ground of such loiterers and hinderers. But instead of doing that, I beg all of you, dear friends, to wake up and see what you can do for the Christ who has done so much for you.

Let us all ask to be aroused again and to be thoroughly stirred up in the service of the Savior. God grant that this South of London—and the North, and West, and East, too—may be permeated and saturated with your earnest endeavors to bring sinners to the Savior! The Lord bless you, for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 PETER 2:18-25 AND 3:1-17

Peter is very practical in his epistles. In the early days of the faith, Christians occupied a far more difficult and dangerous position than they do today. They were few in number and greatly despised. All manner of crimes were falsely alleged against them—they were accused of things too vile for me to mention. The apostle, in writing to these Christians, begs them to so behave that they should commend the Gospel of Christ. Very many of them were servants or slaves, so the apostle says to these lowly followers of Christ, "Here are your duties"—

1 Peter 2:18-20. *Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when you are buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.*

A sense of injustice stings a man. He does not like to lose his rights or to be buffeted when he has done no ill. But the Spirit of Christ teaches us to "endure grief, suffering wrongfully"—to bear still and still to bear. We are to be like the anvil—let others strike us if they will, but we shall wear out the hammers if we only know how to stand still and bear all that is put upon us.

21-23. *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judges righteously.*

There was no reason why He should be made to suffer, for He had done no wrong. He was buffeted for no fault of His own, yet how patiently He endured it all! He did not even open His mouth to murmur or complain, but He handed the whole matter over to the Supreme Court of Appeal—"to him that judgeth righteously."

It will be wise for us also to feel that we can afford to wait, knowing that our Avenger lives and that, in His own good time, He will rectify all wrongs and justify His people against all their accusers. It is sweet, for the dear love of Jesus, to put up with a thousand things which, otherwise, we should resent. "But" says one, "if you tread on a worm, it will turn." Perhaps it will, but a Christian is not a worm—he is a being of a nobler order than that and he does not go for his example to reptiles—he looks up to Christ and follows His steps.

24-25. *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

Therefore, since you have been brought back by the rich grace of God, continue to bear and forbear, that you may be the means of bringing others back. That is Peter's counsel to servants, or slaves, as most of them were.

1 Peter 3:1-2. *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the ord, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.*

Could any men be won to Christ without the Word? Yes, it was even so in the apostle's day. When they refused to attend the little Christian meetings that were being held, and so could not hear what was there said, yet, at home, they saw the change that the Gospel of Christ had wrought in their wives, and they said, "She is quite different from what she used to be. Certainly, she is a far better wife than any heathen woman is—there must be something in the religion which can make such a change as that." In this way, without the Word, many of them were won to Christ by the godly conversation of their wives.

3-4. *Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

There is no ornament like that. No taste can ever conceive anything so lovely as a holy character. No expensive materials, and no ingenious fashioning of them, can ever produce such true beauty as "a meek and quiet spirit." You must have known some godly matrons, venerable Christian women, whose gentle piety has blessed the whole household of which they formed a part. They attained supreme authority over all by simply yielding—they gained a queenly position in the house by gentleness and quietness. Nobody dared to offend them—not because they would have been in a passion, but because they were so inoffensive, so kind, so gentle.

5-7. *For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as you do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

It has been one of the most beautiful results of the spread of the Christian religion that it has uplifted womanhood, so that now, instead of women being, as they were, and still are where the Gospel is not received, the slaves of their husbands, Christianity has taught that honor should be given to the wife. If there are any husbands who do not so, they err from the Gospel way.

8. *Finally, be ye all of one mind,—*

Be unanimous. Do not hold church meetings to talk about nothing and so quarrel for the want of something to do. Be united with the resolve that you will glorify God and that there shall be no dissension, no division among you. "Be ye all of one mind,"—

8. *Having compassion one of another,—*

Have true fellow-feeling towards each other.

8. *Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:*

The Christian should be the highest type of gentleman, in every respect the most gentle man, kind, self-forgetful, seeking the comfort and well-being of others to the utmost of his power.

9. *Not rendering evil for evil,—*

That is beastlike—it is certainly not the rule for a Christian. Good for evil is Godlike. And you who are the children of God should seek to act as He does—“not rendering evil for evil,”—

9. *Or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*

Every man should give away according to what he has. He who gives curses probably gives them because he has so much cursing in him. You can always tell what a man is like by noticing what comes from him. If he curses, it is because curses abound in him. But you are to give blessing to others because you have inherited so much blessing from Christ—your whole tone, temper, spirit, language, action should be the means of blessing to others.

10. *For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.*

Not only no lies, but no guile, no deceit, no shuffling. Say to a man's face all that you say behind his back. You will soon be in trouble if you have two tales to tell—one in his presence and the other in his absence—but if you are free from “policy”—from “knowing how to play your cards,” as the world says, then shall it be seen that you have one of the attributes of a true Christian. If you refrain your lips, that they speak no guile, people will know where to find you and they will want to find you, for such men are always in demand.

11-12. *Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

He “sets His face against them,” as we say that we set our face against certain company which we do not approve. But “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous”—that is, those who seek to do good to others, for Christ's sake, are under the special protection of God, and they have the high privilege of being permitted to pray with the certainty that “his ears are open unto their prayers.”

13-15. *And who is he that will harm you, if ye are followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear;*

Have your doctrinal views and all your knowledge of Christ packed away in a handy form, so that when people want to know what you believe, you can tell them. If they wish to know why you believe that you are saved, have your answer all ready in a few plain, simple sentences—and in the gentlest and most modest spirit make your confession of faith to the praise and glory of God. Who knows but what such good seed will bring forth an abundant harvest?

16-17. *Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God is so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.*

Who can doubt the truth of that clear declaration?

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—492, 992, 552

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